

## Editorial Note

The Balkans has been at the intersection of various migration routes throughout history; different peoples have left their footmarks on the Balkan soil throughout their journeys. These peoples uprooted, swallowed, or mixed with other groups, or they were assimilated by them in a process that eventually led to the emergence of new ethno-national and ethno-religious identities over time. As a result of these intense, centuries long, continuous, contingent, and casual interactions, the Balkans became one of the most ethnically diverse geographies in the world.

Population movements and interactions do not occur in a vacuum. They both affect and are affected by the socio-political context. Between the 15th and 19th centuries, population movements and interactions took place within the context of the imperial rules, particularly the rule of the Ottoman Empire. By the beginning of the 19th century, empires began to collapse, giving way to nation-states as new and novel political formations. Within a hundred years or so, the social, economic, and political landscape of the Balkans transformed dramatically. During this period, conflicts and clashes led to voluntary or forced migrations in various forms, which significantly transformed the ethno-demographic structure of the peninsula. During World War II and the following Cold War era, population movements were also witnessed albeit in smaller scales. The end of the Cold War was followed by merciless ethnic clashes that also resulted in changes in the ethno-demographic structure of the peninsula as a consequence of massacres, and voluntary or forced migrations. Today, the Balkans is a transit route of a huge migration wave from the Middle East (particularly from Syria), which renders it a stage for tragic scenes.

The 17<sup>th</sup> issue of *International Crimes and History* focuses on this geography, which is still dominated by complex political and social dynamics.

The article titled *Panslavizmin Çarlık Rusyası'nın ve Sovyetler Birliği'nin Balkan Politikaları Üzerindeki Etkisi* (The Influence of Panslavism in Tsarist Russia's and Soviet Union's Balkan Policies) written by Ali Asker and Merve Özel Özcan analyzes Panslavism which is one of the most important currents in the Russian history of thought. This study, which addresses the historical development, transformation,

impact and results of Panslavism, provides the readers with a historical analysis about the place and function of Panslavism in the Russian foreign policy on the Balkans and contemporary Russian nationalism.

Cengiz Haksöz's article titled *The Making of the Rhodopean Borders and Construction of the Pomak Identities in the Balkans* analyzes the identity formation of the Pomaks, a Slavic-speaking Muslim community, within its relationality with Bulgarian, Greek and Turkish nation building processes. Within this framework, Haksöz elaborates on the formation of borders in the Rhodopes and how formation of borders affected the making of the identities of Pomaks in Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.

During the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1990's, a tragic period of conflicts and massacres with great humanitarian tragedies took place. The fact that communities that once lived together or side by side later engaged in destructive and bloody conflicts is an historical process that should be analyzed and taken lessons from. İbrahim Fevzi Güven, in his article titled *Yugoslavya'nın Dağılması Bağlamında Josip Broz Tito ve Slobodan Miloseviç'in Söylem ve Politikalarının İncelenmesi* (Examination of the Discourses and the Politics of Josip Broz Tito and Slobodan Milosevic in the Context of the Dissolution of Yugoslavia), comparing the attitude and policies of two Yugoslavian leaders Tito and Milosevic, examines the dissolution of Yugoslavia and analyzes how the different ideologies and policies of the two leaders influenced the fate of Yugoslavia.

Russia's annexation of Crimea consequenced by the emergence of one of the most significant international law and foreign policy issues after NATO's Kosovo intervention. Russia tries to legitimize its policy of invasion by citing NATO's intervention in Kosovo. Abdullah Tunç and Hamdi Fırat Büyük, in their study titled *Kosova ve Kırım Vakalarının Uluslararası Hukuk Perspektifinden Karşılaştırmalı Bir Analizi* (A Comparative Analysis of Kosovo and Crimea Cases from an International Law Perspective), address the Kosovo intervention and the annexation of Crimea with reference to international law, and their historical, demographical and political aspects, and analyze similarities and differences of the two events. Ultimately, Tunç and Büyük reveal the basic differences between two cases, and demonstrate that the Kosovo case can not be a precedent for the annexation of Crimea.

In addition to this studies that focus on the Balkans, the present issue of International Crimes and History also includes Teoman Ertuğrul Tulun's study titled *The Fabricated Pontus Narrative and Hate Speech*, which addresses the "Pontian Genocide" narrative that has been voiced since the end of the 1980s. This study, which is based on a comparative analysis of Greek and Turkish sources, points to hate speech that is integral to the "Pontian Genocide" narrative.

Lastly, Şükrü Elekdağ's report titled *81. Yılında Montrö Sözleşmesi'nin Karşılaştığı Güvenlik Sorunları ve Sözleşmenin Feshi ve Tadili İçin Girişimler Vukuunda Karşılaşılacak Senaryoların Analizi* (Security Issues Faced by the Montreux Convention and the Analysis of Possible Scenarios in The Event of Attempts for the Annulment and Amendment of the Convention) analyzes current security issues faced by the Montreux Convention and possibilities that Turkey may encounter in the event of the cancelation or amendment of the Montreux Convention in recent times of striking geopolitical developments in the Black Sea basin.